Meeting	Management Board	Date	27/04/2015
Agenda item	7	Time	10 Minutes
Proactive publication	Yes	Internal publication	Yes
Title	**Committee self assessment**		
Presenter	Peter Bloomfield		
ICO Plan aim	6. An efficient ICO well prepared for the future		
Information rights strategy aim	10. The public confident in information rights law as necessary, serving the public interest, effective in practice and properly enforced.		
Issue	Each year we undertake a committee self assessment covering the major committees including Management Board. We sent an electronic survey round last autumn and the results are attached **(annex A)**. Most of you will have seen the results earlier in the year in respect of other committees but we need to ensure that the Board has an opportunity to discuss how it works and its effectiveness (partly to inform the Governance Statement). In addition in the Governance Statement (see agenda item 8) the Board has to say consider its compliance with the "Corporate governance in central government departments: Code of practice 2011". The Code is attached for information **(annex B)** and your attention is drawn to the comments previously made on compliance with the code. These can be found in the draft Governance Statement under "Board effectiveness". **Do these comments need amending?**		

Decision	The Board is asked to confirm the drafting of the "Board effectiveness" section of the Governance Statement in agenda item 8. Any suggestions on the better running of the Board are also welcome.
Financial impact	Not relevant.
Risks	Not relevant.

Committee self assessment results

Main points

- Overall there are no major issues or areas of concern.

- All were agreed that the papers provided the necessary information (Q2).

- Generally it was agreed that the frequency of meeting is right (Q5).

- Committee members are satisfied that they can contribute to the agendas if and when they wish to (Q9).

- There is a general feeling that electronic papers will be more commonplace in the future.
  - Audit Committee papers (Q16 & 17) are now provided as one PDF document for members and auditors.
  - There is a project to provide mobile devices to staff which will have an impact internally. A four week pilot involving 20 users is due to be completed by early April with roll out of a further 60 devices to follow immediately.
  - Air Gap Wifi network to be expanded to cover all of Wycliffe House by year end and to be increased in capacity and speed to support additional users and business activities.

- More work can be done to make the work of the committees more accessible to the wider office (Q20). We have been updating ICON and have introduced a monthly Corporate Governance Bulleting for all staff, summarising what the various committees have done in the past month.

- There were interesting comments on the relationship between Leadership Group, the Information Rights Committee and Executive Team. Given the recent updating of terms of reference for Leadership Group it is probably best to see how things evolve rather than to think about making further changes now.

Committee self assessment results

Committee self-assessment results

1.   Which committees or boards do you sit on? Please select all that apply

4	Management Board (MB)
8	Audit Committee (AC)
1	Remuneration Committee (RemCo)
2	Executive Team (ET)
8	Leadership Group (LG)
6	Information Rights Committee (IRC)

2.   Do you generally receive the meeting papers early enough to read and consider properly?

	Too early	On time	Too late
Management Board	1	3	0
Audit Committee	1	7	0
Remuneration Committee	0	1	0
Executive Team	0	2	0
Leadership Group	0	7	1
Information Rights Committee	1	5	0

3.   Do the papers provide you with the information you need?

	Too much	The right amount	Too little
Management Board	0	4	0
Audit Committee	0	8	0
Remuneration Committee	0	1	0
Executive Team	0	2	0
Leadership Group	0	8	0
Information Rights Committee	0	6	0

4.   Are the meetings the right length?

	Too long	About right	Too short
Management Board	0	4	0
Audit Committee	1	7	0
Remuneration Committee	0	1	0
Executive Team	0	2	0
Leadership Group	1	7	0
Information Rights Committee	1	5	0

Committee self assessment results

5.   Are the meetings the right frequency?

	Too often	About right	Not often enough
Management Board	0	3	0
Audit Committee	0	7	0
Remuneration Committee	0	1	0
Executive Team	0	2	0
Leadership Group	2	6	0
Information Rights Committee	1	5	0

6.   If you have any suggestions or comments regarding the previous questions please let us know in the box below

- Monthly frequency of the LG leads to a lot of repeated discussion of matters which have not had the time to progress since we last met. Gives the meeting a sense of little new ground being covered as a proportion of the time we spend in the room. I'd be in favour of a less frequent routine meeting schedule and more use being made of ad-hoc meetings when the input of the LG is specifically needed.
- There have been improvements over the past year or so and IRC is now much more focused than before. LG is becoming more useful but it sometimes feels as though it is being stretched out to fill the allotted time. It would be far better to acknowledge that an Agenda is short and, if necessary, postpone the meeting or cut back.
- Need to be able to receive AC papers electronically as a complete PDF. Independent member provides valuable input. New Chair's approach to meeting format and timing is welcomed.

7.   Are the agendas well-constructed?

	Yes	No
Management Board	4	0
Audit Committee	8	0
Remuneration Committee	1	0
Executive Team	2	0
Leadership Group	5	3
Information Rights Committee	6	0

8.   If you selected 'no' for any of the above please explain and suggest changes in the box below

- I think the group is still finding its niche and where, as a body, it fits into the decision making process.

Committee self assessment results

- The LG is getting better but still too few specific activities owned by the group. Employee Voice and Clear Communications are two such work areas, but otherwise not enough of the things we identify during our annual PESTLE or SWOT are turned into actions for the LG to progress. Consequently agendas tend to involve repeated discussion of issues we face and not enough doing of actions to mitigate risk or exploit opportunities.
- No clear on what should be coming to LG.
- LG is improving but, as per my previous comment, we need to ensure that there is sufficient business for the time allotted or otherwise end the meeting earlier.

9.   Do you have the opportunity to contribute to the agenda and meetings?

	Yes - I contribute a lot	Yes - but I would like to contribute more	No - but I would like to	No - I don't want to contribute
Management Board	3	0	0	1
Audit Committee	7	0	0	1
Remuneration Committee	1	0	0	0
Executive Team	2	0	0	0
Leadership Group	7	1	0	0
Information Rights Committee	5	0	0	1

10.   If you would like to contribute more, what is currently preventing you from doing so?

- I make contributions as and when required. I wouldn't say that it's a lot, but I think it's as appropriate.

11.   Do you think there is the right mix of people on the committees with the right experience?

	Yes	Yes but could do with a change	No
Management Board	3	1	0
Audit Committee	8	0	0
Remuneration Committee	0	1	0
Executive Team	3	0	0
Leadership Group	7	1	0
Information Rights Committee	4	2	0

Committee self assessment results

Please explain your answers further:

- It is tempting to be distracted by the E and D profile of our senior groups. However, if we are satisfied that our recruitment practices are fair we should be pleased to have the best available talent in our senior roles and thus represented on our senior committees. I am not in favour of any form of positive discrimination to make the team photo look more diverse. However, we can do a lot more to make sure the views expressed in our meetings are more representative of the wider ICO. We can also take steps to consult with certain groups of staff if we know decisions and actions are likely to impact on them. Beyond the E and D issue I'm broadly happy that we have the right people in the room, although some contributions could be more rounded and less based on the agenda or needs of particular departments or individuals.
- Both LG and IRC could do with more involvement from other members of management, e.g. group managers.

12. Does the committee consider the right issues?

	Yes all the time	Some of the time	Not at all
Management Board	3	1	0
Audit Committee	7	1	0
Remuneration Committee	0	1	0
Executive Team	2	1	0
Leadership Group	3	5	0
Information Rights Committee	3	3	0

Please explain your answers further:

- There are some areas that the LG are involved in some of the time, but not consistently. Some standard agenda items (at least on a cyclical basis) may be helpful.
- Can still be challenging to make sure the issues considered by LG, ET and IRC don't overlap too heavily. Is there value in merging LG and IRC, particularly given the recent changes? Only the Head of IT, Finance and Org Development are missing from the IRC. Could they just not attend certain LG meetings where info rights are the intended agenda focus? This might help reduce duplication of some discussions and make others more rounded. For example, when the LG discusses Employee Voice, Clear Comms and Staff Training there's an obvious info rights element. Likewise, when the IRC discusses issues like audit self-assessment there is an obvious read across to project delivery and resource planning. We may get better value and more joined up actions if we merged the groups and used the agenda to pull together discussions.

Committee self assessment results

13. Would you make any changes to the committee terms of reference?

	Yes	No
Management Board	0	4
Audit Committee	0	9
Remuneration Committee	1	1
Executive Team	0	2
Leadership Group	1	6
Information Rights Committee	2	3

If you would make changes, what would they be?

- Points covered elsewhere. Not sure whether we should pay more attention to what is written in TORs. We tend not to refer back to them once agreed. Not sure there's anything wrong with this but it does mean they aren't generally viewed as terribly critical to the success of the meetings. Chairs tend to decide what gets discussed and that seems to work fine.
- Not sure whether we need this as a separate group from leadership. Why not incorporate items into LG agendas?

14. How effective do you find the overall committee structure in helping manage the ICO and make decisions?

	Very effective	Quite Effective	Quite ineffective	Not effective at all
Management Board	2	3	0	0
Audit Committee	4	2	1	1
Remuneration Committee	0	1	0	0
Executive Team	2	0	1	0
Leadership Group	2	6	0	0
Information Rights Committee	3	3	0	0

15. Is there overlap between committees you attend (including those outside the formal Corporate Governance structure)

6	Yes
7	No

Please explain why this overlap is useful or not:

- Very useful in discussing key/ high risk issues
- We need to establish where responsibility on E&D lies and build that in to the LG areas of activity.
- It's mainly useful overlap. Committees should be seen as complementary to others and duplication will necessarily occur.

Committee self assessment results

- Overlap between LG and IRC. Do we need both?

16. What would you change, if anything, about the way the secretariat administers meetings?

- The closed Meridio area for the papers means that I can't ask admin staff to print and collate papers for me.
- Put greater emphasis on the need to do more than just administer. Central role across all committees. Could add more value
- None
- Send out papers electronically and reduce number of verbal reports. Always ensure that External Auditors are represented
- Cover sheets should be completed by secretariat. Still room for improvement with minutes.
- electronic papers

17. Do you prefer to work electronically or by paper?

8	Electronically
2	Paper
4	Both equally

18. Do you use the 'committees' page on ICON? For example to access templates and outstanding actions

5	Yes
8	No

If you selected 'no', why don't you use the page?

- I didn't know it was there
- But not frequently. The page is not high in my consciousness.
- Never had cause to. Record my own actions and keep copies of meeting templates. I read minutes when circulated but don't often have the time to read minutes of meetings I've not attended so rely on weekly updates from my ET member to get the key points (which includes the bits not committed to the minutes).
- I'm fine with what I get
- No access to it
- no access / not aware of it
- Occasionally
- not needed
- I was not aware of it.

Committee self assessment results

19.   Do you think enough communication reaches staff about the committee?

	Too much	Just right	Not enough
Management Board	0	3	1
Audit Committee	0	5	3
Remuneration Committee	0	1	2
Executive Team	0	2	1
Leadership Group	0	6	1
Information Rights Committee	0	4	1

20.   If you have any other comments you would like to add about the committees please write them in the box below

- I'm really not sure how clear the wider office is about the work done in our committees or the difference between them. As with most things they can read about it on ICON, but I wonder if we do enough to feed back after the meetings in a way which makes them a bit more accessible. I think there is an active cascade to and from dept. head leave, but beyond that I doubt how many messages are conveyed in team meetings which relate directly to/from each governance forum. May be worth considering a single corporate governance communication stream to save staff caring about which committee something has been considered in. Perhaps a monthly or quarterly newsletter pulling together key issues and decisions discussed and made across the various committees. An extension of the merged action log. Many staff doesn't want to scrabble around reading minutes and probably find it hard to follow the key messages, understanding which committee they relate to. A single document, podcast or video etc. pulling things together might be an interesting way of engaging more staff in the work.

Corporate governance in central government departments: Code of good practice 2011

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/220645/corporate_governance_good_practice_july2011.pdf